

A study on level of physical activity, depression, anxiety and stress symptoms among adolescents

ABSTRACT

BACKGROUND: Inadequate physical activity has adverse health consequences among adolescents. Mental health problem can be developed by lack of physical activity however it is controversial. The current study aimed to examine the association between level of physical activity with depression, anxiety and stress symptoms among adolescents. **METHODS:** A representative sample of 1747 adolescents (13-14 years) was randomly selected from 6 schools in a south part of Malaysia. Respondents were asked to fill consent form, and questionnaires including Depression Anxiety and Stress Scale-21 and Physical Activity Questionnaire for Adolescents. **RESULTS:** Majority of respondents (71.9%) was Malay and more than half of the adolescents had low physical activity. About 40% had depression symptoms, followed by anxiety symptoms (65.9%) and stress symptoms (38.5%). Level of physical activity was significantly associated with gender, anxiety and stress ($P < 0.001$). There were no associations with race, religion and depression symptom. **CONCLUSIONS:** This study provides some evidence among school-going adolescents related to anxiety and stress symptoms and low physical activities. Further studies are needed to show the protection effects of higher physical activity for depression, anxiety and stress symptoms in adolescents.

Keyword: Adolescents; Physical activity; Psychology; Depression; Anxiety